

## **News from U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC)**

Assistant to the Democratic Leader

Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget

U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

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**Contact: Chuck Fant, 202-225-5501**

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### **Spratt's Request for New Shaw Facility Clears Key Committees**

WASHINGTON – U.S. Rep. John Spratt (D-SC) announced today that his request for a new "Deployment Processing Center" at Shaw Air Force Base has cleared two major Congressional committees.

The House Armed Services Committee, in marking up the Fiscal Year 2004 defense authorization bill, yesterday formally approved Spratt's request to accelerate funding of the facility. The Senate Armed Services Committee approved his request last week.

"It's something Shaw needs," said Spratt, the Assistant to the House Democratic Leader who is also a senior member on the Armed Services Committee.

Spratt said this is the fourth year he has been able to step up funding of an important project at Shaw. "In the last three years, after the Armed Services Committee approved the projects – a new dining hall, a new education center, and a new flight-line maintenance facility – the funding cleared the Appropriations Committee, and I am hopeful the process will unfold similarly this year," he said.

"Senator Hollings plays a major role for Shaw in this process," said Spratt, "because he is a senior member on the Appropriations Committee. Again this year, Senator Hollings has pledged his support for the new Deployment Processing Center, and I am grateful. Without his backing, this facility might not be funded this year."

Spratt said Shaw's 20th Fighter Wing and 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force played critical roles in the conflict with Iraq. They also actively supported Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm and Operation Southern and Northern Watch.

"Coordination of worldwide deployments is a major undertaking," said Spratt. "The movement of more than 175 aircraft at Shaw was required during deployment for Desert Shield/Desert Storm. The final figures aren't in for Iraq, but the movement of personnel, aircraft, and equipment was massive. Shaw needs a consolidated, modern facility to handle the load."

Spratt said that Shaw now processes equipment and personnel for worldwide deployments with seven different facilities scattered around the base. He said the task is hampered because planning, weapons storage, cargo processing, and bag storage are located in separate facilities, making coordination difficult and requiring additional movement of equipment. In addition, four of the seven facilities date to the 1950s, and their high maintenance costs further inhibit efficiency.

"The Air Force had budgeted \$8.5 million for a new Deployment Processing Center, but funds are not programmed until Fiscal Year 2007," concluded Spratt. "I believe the Air Force will be better served if funding for this project can be made available in the next fiscal year."

Spratt also announced that the Air Force is moving forward with a \$3.4 million housing privatization initiative at Shaw. "The housing privatization project bodes well for Shaw's future," said Spratt, "and it's on track for initiation in Fiscal Year 2004."

"I have met personally with the Air Force officials who are running this program, and they are confident that bidding the contract for this housing project for Shaw will begin on schedule later this year," said Spratt. "This means Shaw will begin to see its military family housing renovated and replaced as part of a full scale modernization effort starting next year."

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Note: Shaw is home to the 20th Fighter Wing, which represents more than a third of the U.S. Air Force (USAF) "Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses" (SEAD) mission assets. Shaw is also home to headquarters for the 9th Air Force, the designated air force for U.S. Central Command (HQ USCENTAF)